A Note on the Text of 'As You like It,' II, i, 5
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MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT OF 'AS YOU LIKE IT,' II, I, 5.

Some of the earlier critics' emendations of the text of Shakespeare have been accepted with such unanimity that many editions print them without comment, and it is with a feeling of surprise that one realises sometimes how much there is to say for the displaced text of the Folio. Such an instance occurs in the well-known speech of the Duke in *As You Like It,* II, i, of which the following are the opening lines:

> Now my Coe-mates, and brothers in exile:
> Hath not old custome made this life more sweete
> Then that of painted pompe? Are not these woods
> More free from perill then the enuious Court?
> Heere feele we not the penaltie of *Adam*,
> The seasons difference, as the Icie phange
> And churlish chiding of the winters winde,
> Which when it bites and blowes vpon my body
> Euen till I shrinke with cold, I smile, and say
> This is no flattery: these are counsellors
> That feelingly perswade me what I am:
> Sweet are the vses of aduersitie, etc.

In the fifth of these lines Theobald's correction of 'but' for 'not' has been universally accepted, so much so that Professor Herford and the editor of the play in the 'Caxton Shakespeare' print 'but' without a word of comment. Yet 'but' is quite certainly wrong, and the text of the Folio right. The long discussion of the passage which the Variorum Edition reproduces from the different editors is vitiated throughout by the assumption that 'Here feel we not' is an assertion. For the printer of the Folio has made *one* mistake: he has omitted the mark of interrogation. Anyone acquainted with older punctuation will recognise how this has happened. To-day a printer would place the mark of interrogation at the end of l. 11 of the above extract. But the older printers quite naturally disliked reserving the indication of a question to the end of a sentence, when the interrogative aspect of the sentence had become overshadowed by a statement. They often inserted it once or twice in the course of the same sentence. The natural place for the

interrogative in the case in question would be after the seventh line, or perhaps after both the fifth and the seventh. This tended, on the other hand, to obscure the continuous flow of the sentence. In the present case, what began as a question passed into a statement and the question mark was lost.

That the Duke is asking a question, and that 'not' is the correct reading, is clear at once from the rhetorical parallelism and from the sense. Note the parallelism 'Hath not old custome...'; 'Are not these woods...'; 'Heere feele we not....' But the sense is still more convincing evidence. The point of the Duke's argument, the text on which he bases his discourse

> Sweet are the uses of adversity,

is obscured by changing 'not' to 'but.' He asks *three* questions regarding their life in the forest compared with their former life at Court: (1) Has custom not made it sweeter (because it is more simple) than the pomp of Court? (2) Is it not a safer life than that of the Court, where everyone who prospers is the object of others' envy? (3) Is it not a sincerer life, teaching us what we really are, than the life of the Court where we were surrounded by flatterers?

Instead of complaining that he has to bear the penalty of Adam (though 'but the penalty' and nothing more) he reckons the fact that we do feel this penalty as the greatest of the boons which their sylvan life has conferred upon them. It is because we have learned to smile and say:

> This is no flattery: these are counsellors
> That feelingly persuade me what I am,

it is because of this that we are able to say from the heart:

> Sweet are the uses of adversitie...

One might press the argument farther and ask what 'but' really means. The 'seasons difference' is (according to tradition) one of the penalties of Adam's sin, but so are the other evils the Duke has mentioned, with every other consequence of sin. He is not contrasting the 'seasons difference' with the 'pomp' and 'envy' of the life at Court. He is contrasting the sincerity of the icy wind, which knows no differences of rank, with the flattery of courtiers and counsellors. The thought is akin to Lear's

> Take physic, pomp;
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel...

and the boatswain's 'Hence! What care these roarers for the name of king?' and Canute's lesson to his flatterers.

I have noticed since this obvious error struck me, that an anonymous correspondent of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1784 made this emendation, inserting a mark of interrogation after 'winde.' No editor discussed it, and though the Cambridge editors record the fact, it is not referred to in Aldis Wright's Clarendon Press edition.

H. J. C. GRIERSON.

ABERDEEN.

SHAKESPEARE, 'SONNETS' LI, ll. 10 f.

Therefore desire, of perfect'st love being made,
Shall neigh—no dull flesh—in his fiery race.

It is a risky thing to propose an emendation of the text of Shakespeare. One feels that there if there is anything in it, others would have proposed it before—or, in fact, have done so.

I cannot think however that the above lines as given by the Cambridge editors are Shakespeare's. Nor am I satisfied with the emendations mentioned in the editors' note.

The original text has 'naigh noe dull flesh.' Malone reads 'neigh (no dull flesh)' and conjectured 'neigh to dull flesh.' 'Staunton conjectures that *neigh* is corrupt. *wait no dull flesh*, Bulloch conj. *neigh, no dull flesh*, Dowden. *need no dull flesh*, Kinnear conj.' (Cambridge Editors.)

I suggest 'weigh no dull flesh.'

In the preceding sonnet the poet tells us that when he is riding away from his friend,

The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider loved not speed, being made from thee.

In the present sonnet the situation is reversed. The poet imagines that he is returning to his friend:

Then can no horse with my desire keep pace;
Therefore desire, of perfect'st love being made,
Shall weigh no dull flesh in his fiery race;
But love, for love, thus shall excuse my jade;
Since from thee going he went wilful-slow,
Towards thee I'll run and give him leave to go.

Desire, which is identified with love, refuses to keep the slow pace of the horse. It will be no burden to his back. But as the horse,